

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WANTAGE JOINT ECONOMIC
FORUM HELD IN WANTAGE CIVIC HALL, PORTWAY, ON
THURSDAY, 6 NOVEMBER, 2008, AT 7.00 P.M.**

Members present:

Wantage Town Council	Councillors B H Armitage, Mrs P Brundle, P M O'Leary and Dr I C E Turcu.
Vale of White Horse D.C.	Councillor Mrs J Hutchinson.
Chamber of Commerce	Ms C Falkenau and Mr R Turnbull (Chairman).

Others present:

Grove Parish Council Town Clerk	Councillor Mrs J E Nunn-Price. Mr W P Falkenau.
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1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E C Goldsmith and Mrs Z Patrick and District Council Officer Mr T Warren.

2. Declarations of Interest

These were to be given as the meeting proceeded.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 7 August, 2008

The minutes were approved and signed.

4. Matters Arising

(a) Wantage Health-Check : Progress Update

The Steering Group had been involved, over the past four months, in public consultation activities relating to the draft proposed actions. The responses from more than 80 questionnaires had been overwhelmingly in support of the actions. A Steering Group meeting had been held on 29 October, which had been attended by Ann Tweney of the ORCC. She was employed by SEEDA as Co-ordinator for the Market Towns Fund on two days a week. She advised that there was only one application opportunity to secure a grant from the fund, and therefore the application needed to include as many projects as could be brought together. There would not be the opportunity to make multiple applications. Ms Tweney was very supportive, but had urged that more extensive consultation should be undertaken. When advised of the proposed actions that had come out of the Health-Check activity, she had indicated that the majority would not be eligible for funding from SEEDA's Market Town Fund. Whilst disappointed, the Steering Group had committed to proceeding with the actions identified by the Health-Check. This would involve seeking engagement and participation with representatives of other organizations throughout the community. The Steering Group had agreed to meet on a monthly basis in future to progress this. SEEDA was not the sole source for funding, and there were many organizations offering grants for the style of projects identified by the Health-Check. Mrs Val Scatchard had agreed to undertake the role of grant researcher on behalf of the Steering Group. Whilst progressing the actions, the Steering Group intended to conduct further consultation in order to demonstrate community commitment to the proposed actions.

The Forum gave its full support to the actions being taken by the Steering Group.

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(b) French Markets

The next French market was due to be held on 16 November, 2008. It was noted that in support of the Health-Check, the Town Council had recently altered its policy to accommodate a wider range of activities on the Market Square and V.C. Forecourt. It was hoped that this would attract visitors into the Market Place from the Limborough Road development site.

(c) Business Directory on Wantage.com

It was agreed that the Forum should pay for the roundel advertising Wantage.com incorporated into a floral display in the Town Centre at a cost of £60. The Clerk advised that he was awaiting further information from Howard Hill concerning the proposed works to enhance Wantage.com.

It was agreed that the photographs displayed on Wantage.com on the Town Council site would benefit from updating to give a brighter appearance to the town. The Clerk agreed to contact Howard Hill and sort out with him changes to the photographs.

Action : Clerk

(d) Undercroft Car Park in Mill Street

It was reported that the developer had accepted responsibility for dealing with the problem. There was currently no timescales for the undercroft to be opened.

(e) JEF Website

A single page website had been produced (www.wantage.com/JEF). It was agreed that the site needed to be further developed to give more specific information on the Forum's membership and work.

(f) Pedestrian Crossing at Limborough Road Development

The need for increased safety for pedestrians within the Limborough Road development was discussed. The Clerk was to check what sections of the road were adopted by the County Council, and what remained in the ownership of the developer, Bushbuy. The need for a crossing on the adopted section was to be referred to the Traffic Advisory Committee. The need for improved pedestrian crossings within the development was to be referred to the developer.

Action : Clerk

(g) King Alfred's Statue : Marking of Refurbishment

It was noted that the plaque on the Statue was likely to be reinstated by the end of November. The Town Mayor, Councillor O'Leary, agreed to arrange some modest event, to be held during the Dickensian Evening event, to acknowledge the reinstatement of the Statue as a whole.

Action : O'Leary

5. "Welcome Heroes Back" Campaign

This item had been referred to the Forum with a view to seeing whether the Chamber of Commerce could give its support to the campaign through some form of recognition of military personnel returning from war zones. It was noted that the majority of shops in the Town Centre, although supportive of the campaign, were not able to participate, as in the current economic climate attention was being given to

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other priorities. Councillor O'Leary agreed to refer this to the British Legion for its views on what practical actions could be taken. **Action : O'Leary**

6. Town Council's Policy concerning Display Columns and Floral Displays in the Town Centre.

The Town Council had given support, in principle, to using the £6,000 it had offered for the provision of display columns, for other purposes. Details of what was proposed by the Displays Committee still needed to be firmed-up.

7. General Correspondence and Other Business

(a) Financial Statement 2008/9

The attached financial statement was noted. The £1,000 contribution from the District Council had not yet been received. The Clerk was to request payment.

Action : Clerk

(b) Wantage Tourist Information Centre – Re-print of Royal Wantage leaflet

A quote had been received in the sum of £577 for providing 3,000 copies. It was agreed that the Forum should pay for this.

Action : Clerk

(c) Civic Hall Car Park

The car park was to be closed on Saturday, 8 November, 2008, to enable contractors to carry out white-line marking.

(d) Chamber of Commerce AGM

The meeting was due to be held the following week. The Chamber was currently struggling to find anyone in a position to take on the officer roles.

(d) Allen and Harris Shop in Market Place

Paper covering the shop windows was in a faded and poor condition. It was agreed that the agent acting for the owners of the property be contacted to see if the visual appearance of the shop could be improved.

Action : Clerk

8. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday, 12 February, 2009.

The meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

WPF/KR